

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

In 2021 I found out I was pregnant for the second time and knew I wanted a VBAC if it was safe to do so. I researched and made myself educated to be able to have the best experience possible since I already had a traumatic first birth story which I have also written here. But this needed its own entry, as this time the trauma was much worse.

I experience intimidation, fear mongering and lack of communication from Obstetricians. Being under the care of 'Doctors' I did not receive continuity of care and I needed to repeat my history and story at almost every single antenatal visit. I was deemed as "High Risk" because I wanted a VBAC and I again ended up with gestational diabetes.

When I got told I needed to be induced because I have gestational diabetes I declined it as they wanted it done the next day but I needed to mentally prepare as my first induction was very traumatic. I then got told I needed to come in every second day for a week for monitoring of my baby until I come back for induction in a week.

During the week I had cancelled my induction as I knew my best chance for a VBAC was to go into spontaneous labor. My sugar levels were well controlled not only on my four times a day BSL's but also my HbA1c came back good. But the Obstetrician didn't care because in their opinion EVERY woman NEEDS to be induced between 38-39 weeks if they have gestational diabetes and on insulin. They did not look at me as an individual and provide women centered care to me.

When I came in for baby monitoring on the day that I was supposed to get induced. I was made to see an Obstetrician to get an ultrasound done and to go through risks. This appointment was such a mentally challenging appointment. After agreeing to finally have an induction in 5 days' time, after this appointment I got told that I needed to have a vaginal examine to see if my cervix is favorable for an induction. I replied with why you would want to do that today when my induction won't be happening for another 5 days, as a cervix could change in a matter of minutes to hours to days. That same obstetricians then went through the risks. Not all the risks only the ones he could fear monger me with. Like if I don't get induced my baby might die or I will get shoulder dystocia. I never got the risks for waiting, I never got the risks for getting an induction and I never got the risks for a repeat caesarean. He then made me sign a document stating I was going against medical advice. The policy for this hospital states that it is recommended a woman on insulin to be induced between 38-40 weeks. This was a type of trauma to me; I wasn't even at 40 weeks when I was made to sign this document and I didn't have all the risks and benefits for all scenarios. The Obstetrician then stated to me "to be honest I don't think you'll get your VBAC, because I'm very surprised you've not gone into labor yet." I never received compassion or empathy.

The day came for for my waters to be broken after I had the Foley catheter inserted the day prior. I then got a midwife who did not care at all. I tried to talk to her about my birth plan, but she did not want to hear it. I told her I wanted to wear my own clothes and not a hospital gown, she was not happy and said I HAVE to wear the hospital gown. I told her I didn't want

the syntocinon to start straight away, she said I HAVE to have it on. I told her that I didn't want continuous monitoring as I wanted to walk around the room and when hooked up to the monitor, I was confined to one spot. Again, she said I HAVE to. When I kept telling her no, I don't have to we then waited for the Obstetrician to come into the room who agreed to wait a couple hours before starting the syntocinon and I didn't need continuous monitoring while I'm not in active labor and no syntocinon running.

At one point when I felt I was getting contractions my midwife came into the room with another midwife to look at the CTG and I heard her say look it's not showing her having any contractions but look at her. Not once did my midwife even feel my tummy for the contractions the whole time I was in birthing unit, she took the word of a machine and TOCO that had kept flipping on my tummy, which then didn't give accurate readings. My midwife was barely in the room at all, I barely received any support, the only time I saw her was when she was turning up the rate of the hormone drip. At one point I told her not to put it up anymore as I didn't feel safe. Her reply was "If it wasn't safe, I wouldn't do it" then she proceeded to turn up the rate after I told her not to.

The CTG monitor started to beep, and I could see my baby's heart rate dropping, my midwife came into the room turned off the buzzing and asked me if it happens again to buzz her. How was I to do that while I'm laboring and in a lot of pain. Why didn't the midwife stay in the room, why didn't she turn off the hormone drip. I don't know how long after that, the room had filled with a lot of medical professionals. It is now a CAT 1 Emergency Caesarean after a different midwife came into the room and then noticed the CTG and pressed the emergency button.

I burst into tears; I thought I failed, that it was my fault that I did something wrong because I didn't get my VBAC. They raced me into theatre, then the same Obstetrician I had that told me I wouldn't get my VBAC was going to do the surgery, but first he made the anesthetist give me a spinal, even after they told him no it's a CAT 1 we don't have time. By this stage I was mentally broken, I couldn't talk, I couldn't tell them to stop trying with the spinal as I was just trying to get through every contraction. They tried numerous times which ended up with a bruise on my back. Then the other obstetrician said we don't have time you need to just put her to sleep. But before that I had the fear of them almost starting to cut before I was asleep, and they were about to start when the anesthetist shouted, she's not asleep yet.

The next day when I saw the Obstetrician, I didn't even get a debrief of what happened and why it happened all he told me was I had a lot of adhesions and that my baby's head is too big he would never have fit through me anyways. Why even say that he doesn't know if my baby would have fit or not.